

THE GOVERNMENT ENTOMOLOGIST.

Pending the establishment of the permanent head-quarters of the Imperial Agricultural Department, it has been decided that the Government Entomologist, Mr. H. Maxwell Lefroy, should be stationed at Surat, Bombay Presidency. This officer is to gather information in connection with the insects that are injurious to field and garden crops in India, with a view to suggesting simple means, whereby the insects may be destroyed and their ravages checked. There is no lack of scope for this officer's researches, if those who are engaged in agriculture or who are in touch with cultivators will inform him whenever insects are found to be destructive. We print below the circular describing how specimens should be sent and detailing the information required by Mr. Lefroy. Before any useful work can be accomplished in the way of remedies, it is necessary to know what are the insects which prove destructive to Indian crops, and we may then hope that the work of this office may make itself felt and prove of value to the community.

OFFICE OF THE ENTOMOLOGIST TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

Directions for sending Insect Specimens.

Whenever possible, a plentiful supply of both living and preserved insects should be sent, in all stages.

Living Specimens should be sent under, as far as possible, natural conditions, with a supply of food and some provision for air if the journey will occupy more than twenty-four hours. If the insect lives in the ground it may be sent in slightly moist earth. Every care should be taken in packing, so that the insects cannot be crushed or injured by any shaking of the contents of the package.

Preserved Specimens.—All soft-bodied insects, such as caterpillars, may be preserved in weak spirits or whiskey. Such are best forwarded in a small bottle, but they may also be soaked in spirit for two days and sent in blotting paper soaked in spirit, in a tight box or tin.

Hard insects, such as beetles, may be wrapped in soft paper. They should not be pinned and should be so packed as not to roll about. In case of long distances, the insects should be dried first, as they are likely to mould, or else naphthaline or blotting paper soaked in carbolic may be placed in the package with them. Butterflies and moths can be readily killed by pinching them below the insertion of the wings. Their wings should then be folded back over the body and the insect placed flat in a small envelope or fold of paper.

Insects should never be packed in contact with cotton wool. Paper should be placed between the insects and the cotton wool. Scale insects, aphidae and other small insects are most readily sent on their food plant in small boxes or tins.

A good supply of specimens should be sent, as in many cases a few of each sex have to be forwarded to the Indian Museum and to Europe for identification. When specimens are simply to be identified, they should be sent directly to the Indian Museum, Calcutta. When specimens are sent with a request for information, it is desirable to give as many particulars as possible concerning their occurrence, etc.; this is *absolutely necessary* where it is desired to obtain recommendations as to dealing with crop pests. (See below.)

It is desirable to send specimens by the quickest method available, as an extra day in transit may kill all the living insects; parcels arrive more speedily if unregistered, and it is always desirable to inform this office how the specimens are sent, so that their delivery from the post office here may be expedited.

INFORMATION REQUIRED.

Locality.

Vernacular name of Insect.

Name of Plant.

Nature of injury to Plant.

Date of commencement of attack or of first notice of it.

Proportion of crop damaged or amount of injury done.

Extent of the ravages of the insect or of its occurrence.

Previous occurrence in same or previous years.

Are remedies applied by cultivators?

Any fact known of its life history, e. g., where the eggs are laid, where the different stages are passed, time of emergence of perfect insect, &c.

Any other information available.